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# ***The Mongolia Monitor***

**News from USAID/Mongolia**

**No. 54**

**January 2006**

This issue of the Monitor comes to you later than usual, as our small USAID Mission here suffered in February from the ongoing absence of Senior Program Officer Jeff Goodson (still on TDY in Afghanistan) and from the fact that USAID Representative Skip Waskin spent two weeks away from post (he, too, went to Kabul). Remaining staff at post concentrated largely on beginning to get to know the government of new Prime Minister N. Enkhbold, who took office in late January, and in preparing for the External Partners – GOM Technical Meeting, which was held in Ulaanbaatar February 28 – March 1. We will report on both these efforts and other important recent developments very soon in Monitor No. 55. In the meantime, following is the news as of the end of January.

## **USAID PROGRAM NEWS**

### **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: PRIVATE SECTOR-LED ECONOMIC GROWTH**

#### **Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project (EPRC)**

***Chemonics***

[www.eprc-chemonics.biz](http://www.eprc-chemonics.biz)

***Economic, Financial, and Trade Policy Support***

#### **Tax reform**

**Tax reform facilitation:** EPRC fulfilled its commitments to draft model tax laws for the Parliamentary Tax Working Group (PTWG) with completion of a draft law on value-added tax. This model law incorporates commonly accepted international best practices, suitably modified for the Mongolian economic environment.

As planned, the Parliamentary tax retreats were suspended for the month of January; the model VAT law will be presented to the PTWG and other MPs for discussion and demonstration of the concepts contained therein. Passage of a law similar in form and content to the model law would ease the administration of VAT, including obviating the need for the extensive number (approximately 27) of supporting laws governing VAT and Customs exemptions.

Project personnel monitored the Parliamentary sessions continuously throughout the month to ensure that we were available to provide information and support on an ongoing basis.

**Shadow Economy:** EPRC continues to evaluate the results of the Shadow Economy Survey to reconcile national statistics generated by NSO and Mongol Bank with tax data and with household income data generated by the survey. The main results to date indicate;

- The total GDP of Mongolia is between 5-9% larger than the official GDP; in 2004 it amounted to 2.05 trillion Tg (almost US\$700 per capita).
- The total disposable income was \$800 per capita.
- 53% of GDP is generated by the formal economy; 47% by informal economy, including about 25% of shadow economy activities (involving tax evasion).

**National Statistics Office;** Based on the MOU between USAID and NSO, EPRC is working on the following issues:

- Building the capacity within the NSO to collect and process shadow economy/informal sector data,
- Methodologies for the documentation of national accounts, and
- Assisting the NSO to recalculate its national accounts for 2000-2005.

**Mining licenses;** EPRC is processing the data on licenses for exploration and exploitation of natural resources, as issued by the Minerals Authority. This work is prompted by the need to improve the current data system, as well as to reconsider the rates of licenses and procedures of their granting and cancellation. A new draft mining law addresses some of these issues.

### *Cluster and Business Development Support*

## **Tourism**

**Tourism portal to be launched:** PXL, a local IT company, have been commissioned to complete the Tourism Portal design and content. The portal will be a commercial enterprise, owned jointly by the Tourist Information Center, PXL (the operators of the portal), and by investors drawn from the Mongolian tourism industry. The portal is scheduled to be launched on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Tourism Survey, results to be published:** Evaluation of the results of the 2005 tourism survey was completed in January. Of those surveyed, 1.6% were victims of major crime and 11.6% of minor crime.

## **Natural fibers**

**Cashmere linkages with UK and Europe bear fruit:** The chief buyer of a leading menswear chain in UK visited Mongolian cashmere companies in January. The visit was facilitated by EPRC and its intermediary in the UK. As a result, the buyer wrote orders valued at around US\$ 1.75 million, programmed over one year. Orders included sweaters, scarves and other accessories. EPRC will work with the companies to ensure consignments match with samples and are delivered on time. The total value of orders since the linkages program started in November 2005 is in excess of US \$3 million.

**Spinning Capacity;** EPRC has agreed to provide technical assistance under the BDF program to a leading Mongolian cashmere company to commission new spinning and dyeing plants. The investment in machinery is approximately US\$ 400,000. Commissioning will take around four months and yarns should be available in summer 2006. The investment was prompted by the EPRC report on Mongolian spinning capacity.

## Finance

**Local private equity fund.** EPRC has continued to provide guidance to the new local investment bank, MICC, as it continues efforts to raise a private equity fund for Mongolia. Aureous Capital, a major SME fund manager, has agreed in principle to provide technical assistance to MICC to establish the fund, train staff, and participate in the investment committee. Based upon this commitment the Asian Development Bank will now commence due diligence on a possible investment in the first private equity fund for Mongolia.

**Housing Finance.** Based upon the recommendations of EPRC's housing finance expert, a group of Mongolian banks led by Trade and Development Bank and Xac Bank are working to establish the Housing Finance Corporation. This will be an important step towards standardizing mortgage underwriting and documentation criteria and the eventual development of a secondary market in securitized mortgage instruments.

**Technical Innovation Credit and Savings Cooperative.** Utilizing the Business Development Fund, EPRC co-financed a business plan for this new Savings and Credit Cooperative to roll out a unique equipment financing and savings product it has developed. The consultant engaged to develop the business plan has also sourced an investor who will provide the necessary investment for expansion of the product.

## Energy Sector Support

**Energy Law:** Activities on drafting an energy law came to a halt with the change of the government in January. We are waiting to discuss potential changes in government policy and approach with the new minister.

**Regulatory Transparency:** EPRC and the ERA are currently reviewing proposed policies and procedures to further improve transparency and fair treatment of customers in the regulatory process to determine which ones can be implemented immediately and to prepare a strategy for those additional ones to be implemented in 2006. Under consideration are: Customer Service, Consumer Protection, Disconnection Rules, Public communications Procedures, and others.

**Energy Regulatory Authority Training:** Two members of the Mongolian Energy Regulatory Authority participated in ERA trainings in January. The tariff department head traveled to Almaty where she presented the Uniform System of Accounts implemented in the energy sector. The attendees recognized the value in such a system in the absence of price cap regulation methods. The Authority's public affairs officer attended a practical training session in Budapest, where she received materials on dealing with the public, particularly focusing on the need for two-way communications.

**Energy Sector Financial Filings:** EPRC has prepared formats for documenting the revenue requirements of the energy sector entities for use in tariff determination. The formats will also serve to implement a two-part tariff system on the part of generating entities. The formats will be reviewed with the ERA regulators and tariff personnel to ensure proper understanding. Training must be provided to sector entities upon approval of the formats.

**Market Rules:** EPRC initiated activities for establishment of market rules to govern the planned open competitive wholesale power market. Upon completion of an initial research visit, an international expert brought in for this purpose presented information on international best practices to approximately forty stakeholders in the energy sector. This process will be completed in March with drafting of actual rules providing instruction on energy sourcing, dispatch, metering, and payment procedures. As part of his assignment, the expert prepared an evaluation of the technical capabilities of the National Dispatch Center to determine the feasibility of establishing a market with competitive elements in Mongolia at the current time.

### Public Education/National Dialogue Support

**Essential Business Laws CD:** Substantial effort has gone into locating the source information and amendments for the second release of the CD, currently planned for April. EPRC decided to include the text of Mongolia's international treaties on taxation and investment, rather than a list of the treaties in place. As there were no electronic versions of the treaties available, it was necessary to digitally photograph the documents page by page and convert the files to a format suitable for the CD. In addition to the treaties, the second release will include the amendments to the original twenty laws and a substantial number of additional laws.

### **The Gobi Initiative Phase II** ***Mercy Corps International and PACT***

**Planning Meeting Held:** Gobi Initiative (GI) and The Rural Agribusiness Support Program (RASP, which is funded with sales proceeds from the USDA wheat program here) held a joint annual planning meeting on January 16-20. A total of 60 staff from the aimag and UB programs participated. The planning meeting provided an opportunity to review Year Two and the lessons learned, and to plan the program activities for Year Three. The meeting was an important team building and information sharing exercise for the staff.

**Gobi Clients Project 2006 Sales Will be Over \$1.2M:** Business Plan Development for the 170 herder clients that will work with the program in 2006 continued for the month, with the majority being approved. The 170 herder clients are projecting CY2006 sales of MNT 1,465,977,410 (\$1,221,647). The herders have developed business plans in the following areas:

Type of Business	# of Groups
Vegetable/crop production	44
Dairy production	35
Veterinary services	25
Other - gas station/baked goods/shoe maker etc	16
Meat production	17
Felt products	21
Tourism	9
Animal breeding	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>170</b>

**Gobi Clients to Borrow up to \$350,000 in 2006:** Of the 170 herder clients, 151 will require commercial loans to implement their businesses. A total of MNT 420,245,500 (\$350,200) in external financing is required to implement the business activities contained in the plans. Requested loan sizes range from a maximum of MNT 20 million for a cooperative that plans to expand its activities in the meat sector, to a minimum of MNT 500,000 for two cooperatives undertaking vegetable/fodder production. The average loan request is MNT 2.7 million.

**New Template for Veterinary Business Plans Used:** This month, 24 veterinary businesses were assisted with business plan development. A new business plan template, specific for veterinary service provision (drug inventory management, service fee creation) has been utilized. Most business plans are still in the process of revision, with anticipated completion and financial assistance by late February/early March in time for heavy spring veterinary service provision.

**Additional Veterinary Staff Member Hired:** A new program officer for veterinary and livestock businesses, Dr. N. Oyunbileg, was hired in the month. She will be primarily responsible for

veterinary support and livestock business assistance. Her presence will help expand the program's technical capacity to continue to support and work in the veterinary sector, which is a vital component of the Mongolian livestock industry.

**RBN TV Programming Expands:** Pact has negotiated the expansion of RBN's TV programs which will now also be broadcast on TV-9, an independent TV channel. Further discussions to agree on a schedule for RBN TV programs to be broadcast on MNTV will be held in February, after the new MNTV director is approved by the board of directors.

### **The GER Initiative** *CHF International*

In January, 77 businesses were improved or expanded, 7 new startups were created, 97 people were matched to jobs, and 55 new job placements were generated.

**Training and Consulting:** GER provided 398 clients consulting services and 239 clients business training this month. Over half of the consulting clients are now ongoing clientele that receive more than one consultancy from the project. Twenty-five percent of the consultancies were marketing; many were done in preparation of the trade fairs in Choibalsan and Erdenet. Consumption and Savings remains the most popular training. Two special consultancies were provided this month: a follow up to the restaurant training and an oven brick making consultancy.

**Financial Services:** GER facilitated 92 loans in December worth \$73,172, while seven Capital Augmentation Fund (CAF) loans were disbursed worth \$2,828. To date, GER has facilitated 2,607 loans valued at over \$2.8M and disbursed 407 CAF loans valued at over \$350,000. As of the end of January, 39 of the 918 outstanding facilitated loans in the portfolio are in arrears, and 12 of 186 outstanding CAF loans in the portfolio are in arrears. For the life of the project, there are five defaults in facilitated loans, and one defaulted CAF loan.

In January, CHF signed a new agreement with its fifth bank partner, Capitron Bank. Interest rates to GER clients are set at a maximum of 2.7% a month. CHF is in discussions with our four other financial partners regarding their interest rates and already two - Savings Bank and Xac Bank - have lowered their interest rates to meet Capitron Bank's rates.

**Information:** In January, 323 people accessed information services from the project. Meetings with Land Office authorities were held in three branches in Ulaanbaatar, and 55 people who were having problems attended the meetings. Many were able to get the answers they needed at the meeting. CHF is collecting all the problems that were discussed as well as the solutions to the problems and will print a small booklet for its offices as well as the local government administrative units for use for people who have problems in the future. CHF hopes to begin having similar meetings in Darkhan and Choibalsan. After meeting with all khoroo governors in Ulaanbaatar, GER now has more clients coming to its offices referred to it by the local government unit. *Tolgoit khoroo* governors are now having "*heseg*" (neighborhood appointed) leaders deliver the project newsletters to the businesses in their areas. Two *khoroos* governors have asked CHF to provide services at their offices.

**Linkages:** Linkages continue to expand in GER programming. This month there were 30 sales linkages. The total value of the sales was \$15,700, up from \$8,000. Twenty-six clients were involved with these linkages. New sales linkages were established between GER clients and with Altan Zul Tsetsig LLC, Alifa LLC, Olikhon supermarket and the UNDP. GER is in discussions on providing work gloves to the Darkhan Metallurgical Plant, as well as on expanding its agreement to provide ger furniture to the Ger Tereg Company for export.

CHF also facilitated 25 input linkages, benefiting 68 clients, who saved approximately \$860. One of the new input linkages that GER organized is between two major soft drink and juice producers

(Vitafit and Monfresh) and 50 grocery stores in the Ulaanbaatar 4<sup>th</sup> bus stop branch area. Due to the large number of retail grocers purchasing together, the large producers are willing to distribute to the area. GER staff are surveying retail grocers in other Ulaanbaatar Ger Areas to see if there is interest in organizing the same type of activity in their areas.

GER held two Tsagaan Tsar trade fairs in Erdenet and Choibalsan. In Erdenet, 68 producer clients participated, with total sales of \$3,934. The Orkhon Aimag Governors Office and Khan Bank sponsored the event. In Choibalsan, 36 clients and 7 larger partner businesses participated, with total sales of \$5,840. The fair was organized by CHF and sponsored by Khan Bank, Zoos Bank, the Business Incubator, and the Dornod Employment Office.

**Business Associations:** GER advisors provided 58 services to 22 business groups and 127 people. Twenty groups had sales of \$14,000 this month. In Darkhan, GER organized the second vegetable growers meeting, and 24 vegetable growers participated. Vegetable growers are formalizing as groups to share costs and improve their opportunities to sell products in larger markets. The 24 farmers divided themselves into three groups and identified their preliminary needs, including seeds and technical and business trainings.

In Ulaanbaatar, four new business groups are being formed, including a taxi service, a tailoring group, a wool processing and wool products group and a chicken raising group. GER and the Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) agreed to cooperate to support NLM-trained felt producers to become business groups. NLM is a NORAD-funded NGO and has been implementing a wool project in Mongolia since 1997.

**Employment Services:** In January, 155 clients participated in employment and vocational training. UB Tolgoit branch office organized an Open Technical-Vocational day to encourage young people to study and have a profession. Sixteen people chose professions and were introduced to training centers, such as Gobi, Mongolian Cashmere and Camel Wool, Ezio Foradori, Mongolian Builders Association, Ireedui and Abuka.

The UB Bayangol branch was awarded second place as a best employer – or organization that works to decrease unemployment in the District – by the Bayangol District Employment Office. (Power Station #4 won first place.) Authorities of the office said that CHF is one of the few NGOs that cooperates closely with the government to improve government services for the benefit of citizens. Sewing factories, hospitals, service and trade companies, and training centers were also nominated.

**Other:** The new Ulaanbaatar Mayor, Mr. Batbayar, visited GER's Ulaanbaatar Yarmag branch office with the U.S. Ambassador and met with seven clients from the area. The clients shared brief information about their businesses and discussed their difficulties in operating small businesses.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2**

### **MORE EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE**

#### **Judicial Reform Project (JRP)** ***National Center for State Courts (NCSC)***

**US Corruption Expert Trains Prosecutors:** Emery Adoradio, an anti-corruptions specialist with experience in New York and Minnesota corruption investigation and prosecution units, spent two weeks with the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) in January. He conducted a five-day interactive training focusing on the types of cases that the SIU is handling. He also met with key counterparts and is preparing an assessment that will guide further JRP assistance to the Special Investigative Unit. Specific recommendations to the SIU are expected to include case handling, development of protocols for cooperation with law enforcement, and recommendations on specific statutory changes that will enhance the effectiveness of the Unit. The SIU investigates crimes by Judges, Prosecutors and Police.

**Training in Performance Standards for Trial Courts Held:** Susanne DePietro taught a three-hour workshop on Performance Standards for Trial Courts for the Supreme Court Research Center staff and employees of the General Counsel of Courts (GCC). These standards are used by US court managers and leaders to improve the quality of adjudication and make rational policy decisions regarding management of the courts. The purpose of the training was to familiarize the Supreme Court Research Center Staff and the GCC with these standards in order to encourage them to consider changes in data collection and reporting strategies.

**US Expert Consults on Expanding Criteria for Judge Selection:** Ms. DePietro also prepared a memorandum to the Professional Committee on how it could improve the selection process by expanding the criteria for judicial qualification to include greater emphasis on knowledge of ethics, integrity, communications skills, and temperament. She sat in on several candidate interviews and committee deliberations in order to evaluate the current system and prepare this memo based on best practices in the US.

**Proposals for Improving Court Management Received:** In response to the nationwide training on the new Court Management Concept, more than 20 proposals for improving court management practices were received from courts at all levels and in all regions. The working group on the Court Management Concept reviewed the materials. Awards for the best practices were made at the annual conference of Chief Judges and Court Administrators. All materials have been transferred to the GCC. Best practices will be considered in a review of GCC rules and procedures.

**Update on Online Case Information System:** The JRP continues to work with the World Bank Unified Information System project. The Unified Information System is now operating among justice system institutions, but the website, which will make case information available to the public, is not yet running. Software to continuously update case information from the Ulaanbaatar District Courts over the network is being developed by the JRP.

**Training Manuals Reviewed:** Several training Manuals were reviewed for publication by the NLC: "The Suspect's Accused and Witness Statements as Evidence", "Criminal Liability", "Evidence" and "Proceedings with Expert Witnesses in Criminal Procedure".

**JRP Works with World Bank Corruption Expert:** In January, the JRP met extensively with the World Bank anti-corruption expert, Rick Messick, and helped him formulate the World Bank's proposed assistance to Mongolia in this area. As a result of this cooperation, the World Bank will provide assistance in legislative drafting required to comply with the provisions of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, which Mongolia recently ratified. JRP and GTZ will

provide coordination between Parliament, the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, and the drafting working group to assist in the World Bank's efforts.

**New Deputy Arrives:** Garry Ledbetter, the new Deputy Chief of Party, began work in Mongolia.

### **Mongolian Electoral and Parliamentary Support Project (MEPS)** *International Republican Institute (IRI)*

**First Open Committee Hearing Held:** IRI worked closely with SGH Economic Committee members to help it prepare for Mongolia's first open committee hearing, which was held on 6 February, 2006 in the SGH. The hearing was a major step forward for the Parliament in terms of increasing public access to the policy making process. It has also spawned considerable interest among other committee chairs in holding similar hearing in the future. USAID/Mongolia will report in more detail on the hearing, which was devoted to consideration of mining sector policy, in the next issue of the Monitor.

**New Election Law and Campaign Finance Discussed:** IRI consulted with General Election Commission (GEC) and Voter Education Center (VEC) on the new SGH Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform legislation, which is part of the new law.

**Former Minister to Attend World Movement for Democracy Conference:** IRI cooperated with U.S. Embassy Office of Public Affairs in arranging for former Foreign Minister Ms. Tuya to attend the World Movement for Democracy (4<sup>th</sup> assembly) conference in Istanbul in April, 2006.

### **Mongolia Anti-corruption Support Project (MACS)** *The Asia Foundation (TAF)*

**TAF Begins Anticorruption Work:** The Asia Foundation has launched the Mongolia Anti-corruption Support Project with a coalition of donors. The project comprises Advocacy and Institution Building, Media Training and Monitoring, and Public Awareness and Education. A Draft work plan was submitted to USAID/Mongolia, which upon award of subgrants will be refined and enhanced.

## **OTHER USAID PROJECTS IN MONGOLIA**

### **Eastern Steppe Living Landscape Project** *Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)*

In January the WCS Living Landscapes Project focused on completing reports and preparing for the 2006 field season. Meetings were held with the Living Landscapes New York-based staff in early January to assess the progress of "threats assessment" and "species selection" in Mongolia, two components of global Living Landscapes Project.

### **Policy: Illegal Wildlife Trade**

**Wildlife Trade Report:** A report on wildlife trade in Mongolia (based on a World Bank-funded study performed by WCS in the summer of 2005) is in its final stages of editing, translation and approval. Demand for the report and results of the study have been high across government and NGO sectors in Mongolia.



**TRAFFIC Workshop:** As requested, WCS is ready to assist the U.S. Embassy in Mongolia in identifying Mongolian participants for a training addressing the emerging issues surrounding illegal trade in wildlife resources organized by TRAFFIC Russia and funded by the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs through the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. The training will take place in Vladivostok in May 2006.

## **Field Research/Living Landscapes Program**


**Gazelle Ecology:** The Mongolian gazelle research team is working in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute to analyze data on gazelle movement and pasture use collected in 2005 in an effort to model and predict the factors that influence gazelle movement and migration on the Eastern Steppe.

**Landscape Species Selection:** WCS has begun building a list of candidate species and identifying important habitat on the Eastern Steppe in preparation for the final landscape species selection process. Landscape species selection is designed to identify conservation landscapes based on the diverse ecological needs of key wildlife species and the geographic location and severity of wildlife/human conflict.

**Threats Assessment:** An analysis of the threats to wildlife conservation on the Eastern Steppe, recorded and collected through participatory workshops and interviews, is underway with plans to use the analysis as a baseline for monitoring the effect of current and future interventions.

**Avian Influenza:** The WCS Field Veterinary Program is planning to repeat surveillance for avian influenza (AI) in migratory birds in Mongolia in 2006 with funding from the Food and Agriculture Association and WCS New York. Opportunities for an expanded AI surveillance and capacity building effort, in partnership with Mercy Corps, Mongolia, and USAID, are under discussion.

## **Training, Advocacy and Networking (TAN) Project** *Mercy Corps International*

**Grant Agreements Concluded:** In Khentii, Arhangai, and Bulgan, the TAN Project concluded grant agreements with three local civil society organizations (CSOs) that will coordinate TAN's activities in the new target aimags (provinces). In Arhangai, the project will work with the Education and Information Center; in Buglan and Khentii, the project will work with the Aimag branches of Women for Social Progress). TAN provides on-going assistance and guidance to CSO Coordinators to ensure quality implementation of the project in the target aimags. 

**Community Mobilization:** To help CSOs build closer ties with their communities and become recognized community leaders, TAN focuses on community mobilization activities in selected baghs (districts) in the target aimags. As a first step, CSOs select a bagh and conduct an awareness raising event called "One Day in a Bagh" (ODB). In Dundgobi aimag, the ODB was conducted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> bagh of Saintsagaan soum involving around 230 residents of the bagh. In Bulgan aimag, ODB brought together 200 residents of the 3<sup>rd</sup> bagh of Bulgan soum. In Khentii aimag, around 150 residents of the 4<sup>th</sup> bagh of Herlen soum participated in the ODB event. During these events bagh residents received information on the planned activities of the project, information about CSOs working in their aimag and services provided by the State agencies such as the Social Welfare Department, Aimag Children's Centre, and Health Care Department. TAN project staff assisted CSO Coordinators and CSOs in organizing these events. During the trip TAN project staff also met with the aimag authorities and representatives of aimag citizens khurals (local legislatures) to introduce the goals and objectives of the project.

**CSO Network and Capacity Building:** In Arhangai, Bulgan, and Khentii, TAN organized organizational assessment workshops for a total of 49 CSOs. During the workshop, 58

representatives of CSOs received an introduction to organizational development topics, including strategic planning, management systems and external relations, and planning techniques. As a result of the workshop, 40 CSOs assessed their organizational strengths and weaknesses and put together organizational development (OD) plans addressing their organizational needs. Eight or nine core CSOs will be selected in each of the new target aimags for targeted capacity building assistance based on the quality of their OD plans and their commitment to long-term organizational development. TAN's annual plans for training and technical assistance will be developed based on the organizational development needs of core CSOs.

**Social Entrepreneur Support Initiative:** The TAN Project held individual interviews with short-listed candidates for the Social Entrepreneur Award 2006 in five target aimags. Five Social Entrepreneurs have been identified through the process. In Bulgan, one Social Entrepreneur Winner, Ms. Darysuren Davaasuren, was announced at the One Day in a Bagh event. She started working on a work plan to disseminate her innovative ideas in wool processing and felt production and promoting small business development among vulnerable groups. In Uvurhangai, Dundgobi, Khentii, and Arhangai, Social Entrepreneur Awards will be announced at bagh meetings.

## **PACT Community REACH HIV/AIDS Grant**

### **PACT**

**Scripts for New TV Program Completed:** The scripting process for *Living under the Same Sun* is now complete. Twenty-six scripts have been handed over for production, and casting is underway. Pact will produce the series with an independent production studio which brings together freelance production staff from across the country.

**Sub-grant Awarded:** The National AIDS Foundation's (NAF) application for a sub-grant has been approved by Pact headquarters and the award has been granted. Hence, the sub-award agreement has been prepared. Certain PEPFAR indicators for key proposed activities of NAF still need to be put in place.

## **COUNTRY NEWS**

**Winter Olympics Torch Comes to Ulaanbaatar:** The Turin Winter Olympics Torch arrived in Ulaanbaatar, where it was greeted at a ceremony attended by local government and sports officials.

**Ulaanbaatar Hosts Boxing Tournament:** The 2006 women's amateur boxing championship was held in Ulaanbaatar. The matches were three rounds each, and the winner had to win three fights to become the new champion. EBRD Banking Specialist Ella Beavers, who has lived in Mongolia for nearly two years, won a silver medal after defeating two opponents and then going the distance with Mongolia's national kickboxing champion.

**Giant Chinggis Khan Statue to be Built Near UB:** Chinggis Khan's popularity has never been higher – at least in Mongolia. First the airport was renamed in honor of the former emperor. Now the Genco Tour Bureau has announced that it is financing the building of a 40 meter statue of Chinggis Khan on Tsonjin Boldog Hill, thirty miles outside of Ulaanbaatar. The monument will feature the Mongolian hero on a horse, holding a golden whip.